

Walker, V.

86

PAM.
AFRICA
Stories
Walker, Verz ✓

SINDANO AND THE GOOD CHIEF



Copyright.]

[London Missionary Society.

"THE HEALER."

From the Painting by Harold Copping.

(See page 10).

THE BEAUTIFUL PICTURE ON THE FRONT OF THIS BOOKLET

**IS REPRODUCED IN COLOURS,
in the following forms:**

- (1) A LARGE WALL PICTURE** for use in Schools and Homes. Superbly printed on art paper, 20 ins. by 27 ins., in four colours.

Price 1/- net, 1/4 post free.

- (2) A POSTER FOR ANNOUNCING MEETINGS.** Printed in three colours. Size 20 ins. by 30 ins., the picture itself occupying only about one third of the space.

Price 3d. net, post free 4d.

- (3) A PICTURE POST CARD.**

Price 1d. net, 1/- doz. post free.

Orders for any of these should be addressed to

**The EDITORIAL SECRETARY,
LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
16, New Bridge Street, London, E.C.**

Sindano and the Good Chief.

By VERA WALKER.

THE sun was setting over the far-off cluster of date palms as Sindano, the brown African boy, trudged along the narrow path in the high grass towards the village where he lived.

He had been out all day long herding the cattle. He swung his bow and arrow in his left hand as he walked and carried in his right two dead birds that would serve as part of his supper that night. Sindano was always hungry, and he quickened his steps as he saw the thatched roof of the village huts in the distance and thought of the good meal of porridge that would be waiting for him.

Before he reached the village he came across a piece of land covered with the wild undergrowth of the jungle. Away to the right there rose the pointed roof of a hut—a tiny hut, too small for anyone to live in. The African boy shuddered as he looked at it. It was the hut where the spirit of Kakungu, the great chief of his tribe, most surely dwelt.

Sindano's people came from the village

every day and made offerings of food and drink to the spirit.

"Unless we offer sacrifices," they had told Sindano, "the spirit of Kakungu will be angry. Our corn will not grow, our cattle will die of disease, our sons and daughters will grow up deformed and evil. But if we please him, we shall have plenty to eat and drink. Moreover, his strength will become our strength, and when we fight our enemies we shall overcome them."

Sindano had often heard of the great deeds of Kakungu the Chief, of his marvellous skill in hunting, and his strength in battle. He had been so great a Chief that when he died many of the people of the tribe were buried with him, so that his spirit should not be lonely in the other world. There had been many chiefs since those days, but none so powerful as Kakungu.

The house in which Sindano lived was one of the round thatched huts whose tops he could see far away beyond the palm trees. It was dark and stuffy, for there was no opening but the door, which had to serve as window and chimney as well. He used to sleep stretched out on a grass mat, his neck resting on the low pillow made out of sticks. He ate the corn porridge that his mother made every day, using his hands as a spoon. Sometimes he used to set traps to catch birds to eat with the porridge.

Sindano was only ten years old, so he did no very hard work yet. Sometimes he herded the village cattle or watched the crops, but he spent a lot of his day playing games with the

boys of the village—swimming in the river near by, sleeping in the hot sun, hunting for food, or listening to the talk and stories that were told under the council tree in the middle of the village or by the fires in the huts.

Often he was happy enough, but he remembered evil days when someone in the village fell ill, and when the terrible witch-doctor, with his ugly cap and his necklace of thorns, was called to cast out what he believed to be the evil spirit in the sick man. Sometimes the witch-doctor would cut a hole in his patient to let the spirit out. Sometimes he only made a great noise or gave him some evil-smelling medicine to drink and charms to wear. But if the patient died it was said that some man or woman had cast a spell over him, and the witch-doctor would accuse the murderer and demand that he should die a dreadful death. Then, even the strong men of the village shook with fear lest they should be accused. Sindano thought sadly about his own little brother who lay in the hut at home, very thin and miserable with illness. The witch-doctor had done *him* no good.

When he reached home he found the whole place astir with excitement. As he sat down by the big porridge pot with his father he heard scraps of the news about which everyone was talking. Early that morning a man in strange clothes with a pale-coloured skin had come into the village. He had spoken for a long while to the present Chief Mushidi about his son who was ill and cried out with pain day and night. At

first Mushidi had been suspicious, but the stranger spoke kindly to him and said he would make his son well again. Then a strange thing happened, for the pale-coloured man went to the place where Mushidi's son lay and gave him something to drink and touched him with a strange* bright charm. And after a while the sick boy had ceased his crying, for the stranger by his magic had taken the pain away.

"Then," said Sindano's father, "Mushidi and the whole village came to listen to the words of the stranger. He spoke to us concerning the spirits we worship and of the Only Great One,† who is far away. He said "The spirit of the Only Great One is kind and good. He does not wish us to suffer." The stranger told us that he too worshipped Him, that he knew His laws and would teach them to us. Many new things he told us concerning the Only Great One of Whom we know but little. And when Mushidi asked how he had come to know these things he spoke of One named Jesus, who had lived many years ago, Who taught them to men. Mushidi asked the stranger to stay and tell us more, but he was going on a journey and could not. Yet he promised to send a teacher to tell us more, and that he himself would come back and heal those that were sick in the village

* It was a thermometer, but of course the Africans did not know that.

† Mukalamba eka, an African name for God. They think He lives so far away that He does not care about the people of this world.

before many days were past." Sindano listened to all this with wide open eyes. He was anxious to see the pale-coloured stranger, and to hear the story of Him Who told men about the Only Great One. He lay awake that night thinking about it.

The next day, when it was evening, he came and stood near a group of men and boys who sat round a fire telling stories, hoping he would hear more about the stranger. But it was only old Muvanga, the storyteller, telling the tale of the Fox and the Rabbit, which every boy of the village knew off by heart!

And when that was over someone else began to tell again the story of the war-like deeds of the great chief Kakungu, whose spirit lived in the hut outside the village. So Sindano went back to his home to ask his father more about the stranger.

* * * *

Three months later Sindano sat on the ground with a dozen other boys and tried to learn the things the new teacher taught him. Every day he and the others took their places under the shelter of a big tree and had their "school." They were learning to write on the earth with pointed sticks—to make strange marks with meanings to them "hiding words in strokes," Sindano called it. The new teacher taught them to read too, and to say words and sentences after him all together in a loud sing-song voice. And every day he taught them some of the laws of the Only Great One. The new teacher was as brown as Sindano, and he had

the same woolly hair and white teeth. But he wore a clean white cloth instead of the dirty rags the villagers had, and there were no charms hanging round his neck to frighten away evil spirits such as Sindano's people wore. He was strong and kind and the boys liked him, though he was very angry if they stole or told lies.

This is something like the way in which the new teacher told the boys the story of Jesus—part of it every day.

This is how the story ran :—

“Once, many, many years ago, there lived a great Chief of His tribe. The tribe had had many chiefs before Him, some of whom had led their people into battle against their enemies, some who had ruled them well and made them happy, and from one of these rulers this Chief was descended. He was truly their Chief although they did not know it, for another and a stronger tribe ruled over them.

“Now this Chief went through His country doing kind and merciful deeds to all the people. To those who were blind He gave back their sight. Those who were sick with fever, He healed. Those who were lame and paralysed He made strong. And when they thanked Him for His kindness He would say, ‘Even so is the Only Great One kind. He looks on all men and loves them and desires that they should be kind to one another. I speak His Message, and it is by His power that I heal you.’”

Then Sindano interrupted. “Did not His people ask Him to rule over them and help

them to fight against that stronger nation. Did they not do obeisance to Him and offer Him gifts ? ”

“ Many would have done so,” the teacher answered, “ but He spoke to them thus :— ‘ Men think that he is great who commands many people to serve him, and they call him a chief who rules by power and fear. But he is truly a great chief who serves his people by kindness and teaches them goodness.’ So he would not rule over them in the manner they wished.

“ Now it happened,” continued the teacher, “ that some of the chief men of that tribe were jealous, and they were angry with the Good Chief, because many followed Him. So they brought false charges against Him and bribed witnesses to tell lies and deceived the stronger tribe that ruled over them, saying that the Good Chief was plotting to fight against them and take away their power. And having done all this, they put Him to a cruel and shameful death.”

Sindano gasped with horror. “ They killed their Chief,” he said ; “ they were an evil people.” Then he asked fiercely, “ Did not His spirit come back and take vengeance on them. Did He not curse their grain and their cattle and their sons and daughters ? ”

The teacher paused and looked at the little circle of boys who sat with wide-open eyes in front of him.

“ Truly He came back,” he said, “ but not to take vengeance. He was full of sorrow because of the wickedness of His people ; because they knew not the laws of the Only

Great One and because many of them were in pain and trouble. Therefore He appeared to His friends and spoke thus: "Go now unto My people and unto all the tribes of the earth whom the Only Great One loves and speak the words I spoke whilst I was with you, and do also the deeds I did. And behold My spirit shall be with you always and with all those who follow Me."

Then the little boy with the lame foot who sat next to Sindano said, "They did not build a hut for His spirit such as we built for our chief?"

"There was no need," said the teacher, "He would not dwell there; but wherever His followers obey His words and do deeds of kindness and mercy the Spirit of the Good Chief is with them. The Shinanga (doctor) who healed Mushidi's son is one of His followers, and I too follow Him."

The tall boy with the scar on his face said, "There is great need that the Shinanga should come again. Two of Ngulus' sons died of fever but a short while ago, and Katela's wife lies in her hut and cries all day because of the pain in her eyes. Sindano's brother is sick, too. There is much sickness in the village and the witch-doctor can do nothing to help it. He says the spirits of our fathers are angry because we have followed a strange teaching and new customs."

Sindano looked at him scornfully. "When did the witch-doctors heal any sickness?" he asked. "Did they make your lame foot strong, Kitimkoro, when your mother took

you to them? ” “ Truly no,” said the little boy to whom he spoke. When the school was over, Sindano waited whilst the others went back to their homes. “ Teacher,” he said, “ I also would become one of His followers and keep His words. The Good Chief shall be my Chief.”

* * * *

“ Shinanga has come ! ” The doctor has come ! The news travelled like lightning through every hut in the village. The missionary doctor had pitched his tent under the council tree with Mushidi in his best robes of leopard skin, and Mushidi’s son on one side of him, and the teacher whom he had sent on the other. Mushidi’s command was, “ Let all those who have any sickness or disease come before the Shinanga and be healed.” The crowd stood round and jostled one another to see what the Shinanga did, and Sindano stood as near as he could.

He watched them lead Katela’s wife out of her dark hut through the bright sunshine to where the doctor stood. She turned her head from side to side as if in pain and moaned. But when the doctor’s strong, cool hands touched her, she became quiet. Sindano saw the doctor take something, out of a box and put in on her eyes and wind a bandage round her head. He gave something to the women who brought her and told them what they must do to make her eyes well. Then another man limped up to him with a sore foot, and the Shinanga dressed that too. One by one others followed. One had a wound made by the claws of the

leopard on his arm, and the doctor bound it up. Then came two men carrying a third in a blanket slung on poles.

When the doctor saw that man he shook his head. "I cannot heal him here," he said, "he must come to Chipatala.* It is many miles away, but it is his only chance."

He turned to look at a tiny black baby that an African mother had brought to him, and then took some more medicine from the box that was near. The woman who stood near Sindano uttered cries of surprise and joy. "Wonderful, wonderful," she said, "he drives out the evil spirit at a touch."

The woman with the baby came back through the crowd, her face lit up with joy. As she came she threw down on the ground a horn-shaped charm that she had used to find the things she wanted. She had found what she wanted now, and she did not need this any more. The other woman joined her, and they went back to the huts. Then Sindano saw his own mother come towards the doctor, carrying in her arms his little brother. She laid him down on the grass before the Shinanga, and at a sign from him put her arm round him and lifted him up, for he was too weak to move. A look of pity came over the doctor's face.† He poured something into a glass, and gave it to the little boy. There was no sign at first. Then Sindano's brother slowly opened his big eyes and smiled.

"See, see," said the man with the

* The hospital.

† See the picture on the front cover.

bandaged arm to Sindano, "he lives!
What new witch-craft is this?" Sindano
leaned forward with sparkling eyes.

"The Shinanga is a follower of the Good
Chief Who went through the land healing
all those who were in pain," he exclaimed.
"He died, but behold these His followers
keep His words and do even as He. His
spirit dwells in no house that men build,
but wherever His followers do deeds of
kindness and mercy there is the Spirit of
the Good Chief Himself with them."

That night at sunset, the missionary
gathered all the people round him and spoke
to them again of the Good Chief Whom he
followed. Then the teacher called together
his boys to sing their hymn.

Clear and strong Sindano's voice rose
above the rest.

Shinanga Musuma 'lipo
Ishina lyakwe Yesu
Atulangililyo lure
Limfwe shiwi lya Yesu.

Bulo luimbo lusuma
Lwimbo lwe shina lya Yesu
'Shina ili lyachila
Lya Yesu, Mfumu.

"The great good Doctor is here
His name is Jesus,
He is compassionate
Hear the words of Jesus.

Take the glad song,
The Song of the Name of Jesus,
This greatest Name
Of Jesus—Our Chief."

“Come again,” said Mushidi. “Come many times again. And give us a teacher that we may learn more of the new teaching.”

THE END.

Will the doctor come again ?

In the scattered villages of Africa—in the million villages of India and in the towns and hamlets of China hundreds and thousands of people are asking that question.

They suffer untold pain and misery, and they know nothing of the story of the Good Chief Who sent out His followers to preach and to heal the sick.

Sometimes there is only one doctor for hundreds of miles of wild country.

How often can he visit the people ? Cannot they come to the hospital ?

Yes, if there were enough hospitals. But every hospital is full, and each needs doctors and nurses and a big supply of medicines and bandages.

We call ourselves followers of the Good Chief.

What are we going to do ?

“NEWS FROM AFAR.”

$\frac{1}{2}$ d.

**The best illustrated
Monthly Magazine
for Young People.**

The story of Sindano is taken from its pages. There are always good stories and good pictures to be seen there.

Order the monthly issues through your Church or Sunday School and read the news of the great enterprises of good men and women in India, China, Africa, Madagascar and Polynesia.

*Further Copies of this Booklet may be obtained
for 1/- per dozen, post free, from*

**The EDITORIAL SECRETARY,
LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,
16, New Bridge Street, E.C.**